



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Wednesday, October 18th. The principal concern today was the debate about the schedule. The President had me in at 8:15 and wanted to get started talking about it right away, so I missed the staff meeting. He feels that the key argument on getting out is the problem next week on television, the momentum story for McGovern and the coverage of him, which will mean that we'll be blamed for losing the House and Senate, and we have the problem of having to live with those people. So we have to do what we have to do in order to avoid being a loser. He raised the idea of going back to a one event stop rather than helicoptering in to three places, wondered if there was one place out in the country that would work out. He just feels Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, with no outside schedule will not wash, so we've got to do a one shot on Wednesday or Thursday. He suggested Kentucky for Louie Nunn, and we expanded that to doing it, instead of Saturday after Ohio, do it as a Kentucky, West Virginia stop on Wednesday or Thursday evening as a night rally. He feels that we've got to decide on a plan now and not change, and at first wanted to just add Kentucky to Ohio on Saturday, then, the more he thought about it, got to the idea I mentioned above, doing it Wednesday night with some good statements dropped in conjunction with it.

Colson was panic stricken about the idea of expanding the schedule and argued strongly all kinds of points, trying to avoid it. Ehrlichman raised the point of some other ideas, most of which the President shot down as he shot down most of Colson's ideas for activities at the White House. He still feels the real need is for one thing in the middle of the week, and so that's where we're ending up and try to work that out.

He got into juggling the radio speeches around, and also the final week he's going to move Chicago up to Tuesday, because we've learned McGovern's going to be in Chicago Wednesday night and Thursday. And then will do his TV Thursday night, with a radio speech Wednesday, in-between.



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The only other item today is Henry and his Vietnam negotiations. The President called Haig in first thing, said he's very concerned about Henry's plan to go to Vientiane for a second meeting with Le Duc Tho, because he feels he's got to come back here after the meeting with Thieu for consultation. Although, as the day went on, the thing looked better, and Rogers even reviewed the political settlement...

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DECLASSIFIED - E.O. 13526, Sect. 3.4: by MS, NARA, June 12, 2013  
Audio Cassette 25, Side B, Withdrawn Item Number 23 [AC-25(B) Sel 19]  
Duration: 57 seconds

...felt that it was a complete capitulation by the other side and better than we could have possibly hoped for. He had Haig in later this afternoon again talking about the same thing, but giving Haig some advice to give Henry on how to handle Thieu. His point was that he should not go in with the full details of the settlement right at the beginning. He should hold out a little; make, build it up some. Make the point that the President laid down the conditions that there be no coalition government. And don't show him paper on what we do have, and don't give him the dope on the political settlement. Go first into the military, and go through all that, and then give him part of what we've got, and let him argue about it. Then step back to what we actually have, which he, by this time, would be delighted to buy.

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The President is still not fully sold, I don't think, on whether he should push for the deal before the election, but the way Henry is going now, it looks as if it will be inevitable, and the President later today relented and said he could go to Vientiane if he had the full deal worked out...



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[End of October 18th]